

(11)
A

S E R M O N

Preach'd to the

S O C I E T I E S

F O R

Reformation of M A N N E R S

A T

S A L T E R's-HALL,

On M O N D A Y, J U N E 29, 1726.

By B. A. A T K I N S O N.

Publish'd at their Request.

L O N D O N :

Printed for E M A N. M A T T H E W S, at
the *Bible* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1726.



To the Right Worshipful,
John Thompson, Esq;

Alderman and Sheriff of the City of London.

S I R,



*T*he Desire of the Gentlemen engaged
in the Reformation of Manners,
this plain Sermon was preach'd; and
now, at their Request, is sent Abroad
under your Patronage.

*I*T should seem a good Omen, that God is pleased to raise up Vertuous and Publick Spirited Magistrates in this Vicious Age, who are not Terrors to good Works, but to the Evil; who will not bear the Sword in vain, but as Ministers of God, will be Revengers, to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.

MAY the Number of such every where abound!
That all reforming Attempts thro' the Land, and
particularly in these Great Cities, may be countenanc'd

The DEDICATION.

nanc'd and supported: Then we may hope the Wickedness of the Wicked will come to an End, and the Just will be establish'd.

S I N C E Providence hath invested you, Worthy Sir, with the Authority of a Magistrate, it is not doubted but you will show your Inclination, (as you will see there is great Necessity) to employ your Power and Influence for the Glory of God, the Encouragement of Religion and Vertue, and the Discouragement of Vice and Prophaneness. In a private Life your Actions every where praise you: And your Name is valued among all that Love the Protestant Religion, and our present Liberties. May your Publick Actions ever answer such a Character! And may you find many others, to concur with you in the Magistracy of this great City; That under the Reign of the Best of PRINCES, the Righteous may flourish, and there may be much Peace.

M A Y the Blessings of both Worlds be secured to your Self and Family. May your Life be lengthened out, for Great and Valuable Purposes; and your Vertues and Graces ever live in your hopeful Descendants. These are the fervent Wishes and Prayers of many others, as well as of,

S I R,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

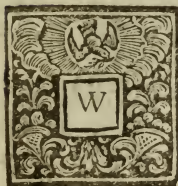
Bridgewater-Square,
July 4, 1726.

B. A. Atkinson.



I *Pet.* IV. Ver. 14, 15, 16.

If ye be Reproach'd for the Name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you : On their Part he is Evil spoken of, but on your Part he is Glorify'd. But let none of you suffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or as an Evil-Doer, or as a Busy-Body in other Men's Matters. Yet if any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be asham'd, but let him Glorify God on this Behalf.



W H E N I, the unfittest among many was invited into this Service, wherein divers of my reverend Fathers and Brethren, have gone before me ; I consider'd how I might best discharge my own Duty, and answer your pious Design. I was led to think, I could not do better on this Occasion, than offer somewhat to support you under the many vile and unjust Reproaches, you have suffer'd from those Sinners you have with great Tender-
 B ness

ness and Compassion, endeavour'd to reform.

AND I was the rather inclin'd to insist on that Argument, because, I don't know, whether ever it hath been professedly handled in more than one of those annual Discourses that have been preach'd to you. † And because *David* the Man after God's own Heart, who had been train'd up by various Sufferings, seems to be sensibly affected with that Kind of Suffering, when he says, *Reproach hath broken my Heart, and I am full of Heaviness.* *

THE *Christians* to whom *St. Peter* wrote his Epistle, were in, or near a suffering State, and he accordingly endeavours to Arm them against it. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery Tryal, which is to try you, as tho' some strange Thing happen'd unto you; but rejoyce, in as much as ye are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings; that when his Glory shall be reveal'd, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy.* †

IN the Words of the Text, our Apostle descends to a lower kind of Suffering, which was not peculiar to that first Age, when *Christianity* was the *Scēt* every where spoken against.

HERE we have 1st a Case suppos'd, and it is not an uncommon one, *If ye be Reproach'd for the Name of Christ:* 2. The Hap-

† Vide, *The Reverend Mr. Wright's Reformation Sermon, preach'd June 27, 1715. Particularly, his very judicious Remarks on Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon at Darby, Page 18, 19, 20, 21.*

* *Psal. lxxix. 20*

† *1 Pet. iv. 12. 13.*

pineness of such declar'd. *Happy are ye.* 3. The Reason assign'd why they are Happy. *For the Spirit of Glory, and of God resteth upon you, on their Part he is Evil spoken of; but on your Part he is Glorify'd.* 4. A seasonable and necessary Caution subjoyn'd. *But let none of you suffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or as an Evil-Doer, or as a Busy-Body in other Men's Matters.* 5. Direction given them how they should behave whilst they suffer as *Christians*, *Yet if any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him Glorify God on this behalf.*

1. I begin with the Case suppos'd, *If ye be Reproach'd for the Name of Christ.* This is the Persecution of the Tongue, when the Hands of wicked Men are ty'd up, that they cannot otherwise hurt and injure the Disciples of Christ; they say, *With our Tongues will we prevail, our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us.* †

THE original Word * is the same in another Place, where it is translated Reviling, *Blessed are ye when Men shall Revile you, and Persecute you, and say all Manner of Evil against you, falsely for my Sake.* §

The primitive *Christians* were very much Reproach'd as well as in other Respects persecuted by their Enemies; they were charged with Murder, Incest, Sacrilege; yea, reckon'd Overturers of the State, as the Inscription upon *Dioclesian's* Coin testifies, *Nomine Christianorum deleto, qui Rempublican everterunt.* i. e. The Name of the Christians

† Psal. xii. 4.

* ὀνειδίζετε

§ Mat. v. 11

being destroy'd, who overthrew the Common Wealth. †

THE Apostles were look'd upon as the *Troublers of the Cities* withersoever they came, * and *Turners of the World upside down.* † And *Tertullus* the Orator accus'd St. Paul in this Manner, *We have found this Man a pestilent Fellow, and a mover of Sedition amongst all the Jews throughout the World, and a Ring-Leader of the Sect of the Nazarenes, who also hath gone about to prophane the Temple.* *

AND according to St. Paul's own Account of the Matter, it seems they were *Revil'd, Persecuted, Defam'd, made as the Filth of the World, and the Off-Scouring of all Things.* †

AND in modern Times, how have Protestants been Reproach'd by their Enemies the Papists? and in all Ages good Men have been Reproach'd by the Wicked; the Enmity between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent, hath indeed discover'd it self more in one Age than another, but in every Age it hath discover'd it self by Reproaches and Revilings.

AND this among Christians hath been for the Name, *i. e.* for the Sake of Christ; because some make a Profession of Faith in him, and Act more agreeable to it than others; for this Reason they have been expos'd to various Reproaches.

For what else have the SOCIETIES for Reformation of Manners been Reproach-

† Vide. *Sculterum apud Synopsin in Mat. v. 11.*

* Act. xvi. 20.

† Act. xvii. 6.

* Act. xxiv. 5, 6.

† 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

ed, but for the Name of Christ? Because they endeavour to restrain Men from those Vices which disturb the civil Peace, as well as are a great Reflection on that *Worthy Name whereby we are call'd*.

HAVE not you been run down as Busy-Bodies, meddling with other Men's Affairs, and as vile Informers? tho' Time hath been when Informing against the Quiet in the Land hath not been esteem'd by themselves so scandalous a Practice. " To get Possession of Mens Goods, or to extort large Fines from them, as some Informers were wont to do, meerly for differences in Religion, is a Scandal to me (says my Author) on all Hands, but to break up Houses of Lewdness, and to bring common Swearers, and Cursers, and Prophaners of the Lord's Day, to such Punishment as the Law appoints, in Order to their Reformation, and Amendment; this surely instead of bringing Reproach must deserve Veneration. †

NAY, have not you been charg'd with being as Wicked as any others in Secret, and that you have found your Account in bringing Offenders to Justice, according to the Laws of the Land, made against Vice and Prophaneness, by extorting Money from the Delinquents?

I might, in answer to this Appeal to your Yearly Vindication of your selves, but I choose to do it at present in the Words of a very good Advocate for you. " Let any

“ Man consider the Rules by which the S O-
 “ C I E T I E S propose to themselves to
 “ AËt, and I apprehend no Prejudice will lie
 “ against them, among the wise and sober
 “ Part of the World; it will rather be the
 “ Concern of every good Man to encourage
 “ and assist them: They are under peculiar
 “ Obligations from their own Rules to AËt
 “ with *True Humility of Heart; a disinterested*
 “ *Mind; habitual Prayer; unfeign'd Charity to*
 “ *all Men; and resignation to the divine Provi-*
 “ *dence in all Events which may befall them.* And
 “ as they AËt upon the noblest Principles,
 “ so is their Spirit and Conduct the most
 “ Generous.

“ T H E Design which they are pursuing,
 “ hath been render'd very costly by Suits,
 “ and incidental Charges, as well as by a
 “ necessary stated Expence; and yet upon
 “ the Conviction of Offenders, that half
 “ which the Law allows to the Informer,
 “ they constantly remit to the Poor of the
 “ Parish, to prevent any umbrage of selfish
 “ and mercenary Views. †

B U T, my Brethren, be not uneasy under
 these unjust and undeserv'd Reproaches,
 herein you take Part with the Prophets,
 Apostles, and Disciples, of our blessed
 Lord in former Times; and in this Usage
 from wicked Men you are conform'd to
 Christ, your Head and Leader, *And shall we*
not go forth to him without the Camp, bearing his
Reproach?

† Occasi. Paper, Vol. 3. No. xii. Pag. 25.

II. O U R Apostle tells us, they are happy who are Reproach'd for the Name, *i. e.* for the Sake of Christ. The World about them think them most unhappy on that Account; and Christians themselves are too often apt to sink under Reproaches, and to reckon themselves unhappy; and it must be acknowledged, that Reproaches sit very uneasy on an innocent and generous Mind, conscious to it self of giving no just Occasion for them. But if the Spirit of God by St. *Peter* declares such happy, they are so, whatever the World thinks of them; nay, whatever they may think of themselves, under the Power of a Temptation, for he not only declares the Thing as it is, but effects it, and makes them happy; for, *He whom thou Blessest is Blessed, and he whom thou Cursest is Cursed.*

G I V E me leave, as we pass on, to make this one Remark; what a wide Difference is there between the Opinion of the World concerning Happiness, and happy Persons, and the Opinion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit? The World thinks those Unhappy and Miserable, that are Reproach'd for the Name of Christ; whereas God in his Word assures us, they are Happy, they are Happy at present, much Happier than they that Reproach them, they are in the Way to Happiness, and in due Time they shall be compleatly and perfectly Happy.

III. T H E Apostle assigns this Reason why such are Happy, *For the Spirit of Glory, and of God, rests upon them, on their Part he is Evil spoken of, but on your Part he is Glorify'd.*

“ The Spirit of Glory, or as some † Copies
 “ Read, *τὸς ἁγίους καὶ δυνάμεις* is doubtless the
 “ Holy Spirit, who attended the Preaching
 “ the glorious Gospel, and made it to be the
 “ Ministratation of the Spirit, *ἐν ἁγίῳ* in Glory,
 “ and by partaking of which Spirit, we
 “ Christians are said to be transform’d from
 “ Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of God,
 “ † and who is also stiled *πνεῦμα δυνάμεις* the
 “ Spirit of Might or Power. *

“ T H I S glorious Spirit rests upon you,
 “ resides with you; dwells in you, supports
 “ you, and is pleas’d with you; and is not
 “ this a mighty Happiness? †

O B S E R V E here, 1. the Holy Spirit is
 the Spirit of Glory, he is a glorious Spirit,
 glorious in himself, *glorious in Holiness*, and
 is the Author of Glory to us, he prepares
 us for Glory, and is in Believers, *The Earnest*
of their Inheritance; in whom also after that ye
Believ’d, ye were Seal’d with that Holy Spirit of
Promise, which is the Earnest of our Inheritance,
until the Redemption of the purchased Possession,
*unto the Praise of his Glory. **

2. T H I S Spirit of Glory is the Spirit of
 God, sometimes call’d the Spirit of God,
 sometimes the Spirit of his Son, the great
 Gift of the Father, and the Purchase of his
 Son, *What Man knoweth the Things of a Man,*
save the Spirit of a Man, which is in him? Even
so the Things of God knoweth no Man but the
Spirit of God. † And because ye are Sons, God

† Whitby in Loc.

* 2 Tim. i. 7.

* Ephes. i. 13, 14.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18.

† Mr. Henry in Loc.

† 1 Cor. ii. 11.

hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into your Hearts, crying abba Father. †

3. THIS Spirit of Glory rests upon them that are Reproach'd for the Name of Christ: And that is more than sufficient to counter-balance all the Reproaches that are cast on you by them that walk in *Lasciviousness, Lusts, excess of Wine, Revellings, and Banquetings*; wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you. * He rests upon you, and dwells in you, to encourage and assist you, to support and bear you up under all the vile Reproaches of Sinners, that are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Belly, and whose Glory is in their Shame, who mind earthly Things.

4. THE Reproaches cast on any for the Name of Christ, are and will be judg'd, as cast on the Spirit of God, *On their Part he is Evil spoken of*. This *He* must refer either to Christ, or the Spirit of God and of Glory; take it in either Sence, it comes to the same Thing. Whom *Saul* was Persecuting the Disciples of Jesus, he is charg'd by the Voice from Heaven with Persecuting Jesus himself, *Saul, Saul, Why Persecutest thou me?* And again, *I am Jesus, whom thou Persecutest*. † The blessed Jesus was now ascended into the highest Heavens, and was out of the Reach of *Saul's* persecuting Rage; but whilst he breathed out Threat'nings, and Slaughters, against the Disciples of Jesus, he reckons himself Persecuted in them.

† Gal. iv. 6. * 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. † Act. ix. 4, 5.

AND as on the one Hand, this may administer some Comfort to you whenever you are Reproach'd for the Name of Christ, that their Reproaches don't stop at you, but rise much higher, that they strike at Christ through you, and this should instead of exciting any unbecoming Passions in you, rather engage you to pity and pray for them; so on the other Hand, it should methinks, fill the Minds of such Revilers, and Reproachers, with Terror: How will they be able to answer it at the great Day? when Christ shall say to them, Sinners, why did you Reproach me, or my Spirit? Will they reply? Lord, we did not Reproach thee, but did you not (will he reply) Reproach my Servants, because they vindicated the Honour of my Laws, and Government; in as much as you reproached them, I take it as done to my self, you reproached me; and what Occasion did I, or they, give you to reproach us? when we were engag'd in a most kind Design to prevent your eternal Ruin and Destruction.

5. THE blessed Jesus and the Spirit of Glory and of God, are gloryfied when we are reproached for the Name of Christ. By your Patience under Reproaches God is gloryf'd: Let us then Glory in Reproaches for Christ's Sake, and *rejoyce if, at any Time, we are counted Worthy to suffer Shame for his Name.*

IV. A NECESSARY Caution is here subjoyned. *But let none of you suffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or as an Evil-Doer, or as a Busy-Body in other Men's Matters.* " One
 " would think such a Caution as this needless,
 " to

“ to such an excellent * Set of Christians as
 “ these were, but their Enemies did charge
 “ them with these, and other foul Crimes.

“ Whosoever reads *Josephus*, will find there
 “ was the greatest Reason to give these Cau-
 “ tions to the *Jewish* Nation, which then pro-
 “ digiously abounded with Thieves, were
 “ continually employed in murdering, not
 “ only Heathens, but their own Country-
 “ Men; were κακοποιοι, or as some Copies
 “ read κακῶργοι, Evil-Doers, to such an
 “ High Degree, that he says, They practised
 “ all Manner of Injustice and Wickedness
 “ that was never thought of, or committed,
 “ and ἀλλοτριω-ὀπίσκοποι, Men who would
 “ have the Government of other Men’s Con-
 “ sciences, and Over-Rule their Actions,
 “ especially the Zealots. †

BUT can it be said of these Societies?
 Tho’ they have been often Misrepresented,
 and Reproached, by the Sons of Wickedness,
 can it be said of them? That any of them suf-
 fer Reproaches as Murderers, or Thieves,
 or Evil-Doers, when it is the Vertuous De-
 sign of these Societies, to prevent those Evils
 which disturb the Publick Peace, and which
 bring a Reproach upon a Nation, for as *Righ-
 teousness exalts a Nation, so Sin is the Reproach of
 any People*; * and especially a professing Peo-
 ple, and will prove their Ruin, without time-
 ly Repentance and Reformation.

SOME will say it may be, and we know
 it hath been often said, If you are not Mur-

* *Mr. Henry in Loc.*

† 14. PROV. 34.

† *Whitby in Loc.*

derers, Thieves, and Evil-Doers, yet you are Busy-Bodies, for you are Busy-People, meddling with other Men's Affairs. To which it is answered, Who are they that accuse you in this Manner but the Crafty and Wicked, or the Weak and Ignorant? Are not the Crimes of which you convict notorious Sinners, (and on which you found your Prosecutions) condemned by the Laws, both of God and Man? As Drunkenness, Uncleaness, and Unnatural Wickedness, of which some have been very lately convicted; Gaming, Revellings, &c.

WAS Cain right in his Notions, when he reply'd, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* * Is that recorded for our Imitation, or for our Warning? Did God design to make Men Busy-Bodies, when he gave that Law? † *Thou shalt not Hate thy Brother in thy Heart; thou shalt in any wise Rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* Where we may observe, If we don't Rebuke our Brother, we suffer Sin upon him, and are charged with hating him in our Heart; and how can we Rebuke him, without busying our selves in other Men's Affairs? Can it be a Fault to yield Obedience to the Divine Law, which is not abrogated, that I know of, by the Lord Jesus Christ, under the New Testament Dispensation? Were Christ and his Apostles Busy-Bodies, because they were engaged in the most Kind, as well as Difficult Work of Reforming the World? Is it acting the Part of a Busy-Body, to endeavour the Conversion of one

* Gen. 4. 9.

† Lev. xix. 17.

that erreth from the Truth, and to pluck Fire-Brands out of the Burning? When St. James assures us, That is the Way to save a Soul from Death, and to cover a Multitude of Sins. † Are we not forbid, having Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes? but commanded rather to reprove them. * And is it not the common Duty of all Christians, To WARN THE UNRULY, as well as to Comfort the Feeble-Minded? § and to exhort one another Daily, whilst it is called to Day? ¶ and to consider one another, and to provoke one another to Love and Good Works? * Charity, the Glory of our Religion, seeketh not her own, i. e. not only her own Benefit, but that of others too, and accordingly St. Paul directs us, Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others. † Would it not be a great Reflection on our Nation, That we had the best Laws, but the worst executed? If the Laws against Prophaneness and Immorality of all Kinds be good, then it is necessary that they should be executed; and how can Magistrates come to the Knowledge of notorious Offenders, if some will not generously inspect the Manners and Behaviour of those about them?

I cannot borrow better Words than those of an § Excellent Person, in a Sermon preached in another Place before you, a few Years

† Jam. v. 19, 20.

§ 1 Theſ. v. 14:

* Heb. x. 25.

* Eph. v: 11.

¶ Heb. iii. 13:

† Phil. ii. 4.

§ The Bishop of Gloucester's Sermon at Bow, Monday, December 31, 1722, Page 16, 17, 18.

since. “ However little hath been the Bene-
 “ fit, and vain hath been the Attempts of
 “ good Men, from these Endeavours of the
 “ Publick, while a Zeal hath been wanting
 “ in private Persons to prosecute Offenders;
 “ while an imprudent Tenderness, and false
 “ Modesty kept Men from informing, and
 “ giving Evidence, the Power of the Magi-
 “ strate was usefess, as a Sword in the Hands
 “ of a Statue, and as little terrifying. What
 “ Praises therefore and Encomiums may we
 “ not justly offer to those Faithful Servants,
 “ and Valiant Soldiers of God, who have
 “ lifted themselves under the Banners of
 “ Christ for this particular Service, and
 “ have determined at all Hazards, by Ho-
 “ nour and Dishonour, through Evil-Re-
 “ port and Good-Report, to engage the Pow-
 “ ers of Darkeness, and harrass the Tents of
 “ Ungodliness, and with an undaunted Va-
 “ lour, and indefatigable Industry to carry
 “ on the Attack against Vice and Irreligion,
 “ though covered with the fiery Darts of
 “ the Wicked, and the Hatred and Opposi-
 “ tion of a corrupt World? To be thus aid-
 “ ing and assisting to the Powers ordained of
 “ God, for the Punishment of Evil-Doers,
 “ is a very laudable Employment, and the
 “ truest Way of promoting the Interest of
 “ Religion, and the Happiness of Civil Soci-
 “ ety.

Y E T permit me in the Close of this Head
 to observe to you, it is not amiss nor impro-
 per to caution, even good Men against very
 bad Crimes. Our Lord caution'd his Dis-
 ciples against being *overcharged with Sur-
 feiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this
 Life.*

Life. † And St. Paul adviseth that excellent Minister of the Gospel Timothy, *To flee youthful Lusts, § and to rebuke the younger Women as Sisters, with all Purity.* *

I WILL not enlarge on this Caution, being perswaded that you who are so zealous for reforming others, are throughly sensible of the Necessity of personal and family Reformation in your Selves and Families, *thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self?* ¶ and that you will not think it enough to cease to do Evil, but that you will continue in Well-doing, and follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call upon, the Lord out of a pure Heart §; and that you do, and will Endeavour more and more to shine as Lights in the World, having your Conversation Honest among your Neighbours, and Acquaintance, that if any speak against you as Evil-Doers, they may by your good Works which they shall behold, glorify God in the Day of Visitation. *

V. WE have Direction given to them that suffer as Christians. *Yet if any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on that Behalf.* To suffer as a Christian is, 1st, to suffer for Christianity, for professing and acting like a Christian; since it is not the Suffering, but the Cause that makes the Martyr, or the Confessor.

IT is not suffering Reproach, or any Thing else, for doubtful and disputable Opinions, I am here considering; but I call that Chri-

† Luk. xxi. 34.

* 1 Tim. v. 2.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 22.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 22.

¶ Rom. ii. 21,

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

Christianity which is *pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father.* It is standing up for the Cause of God and Christ, of Religion and Vertue, which is a Cause all good Men are engaged in, against the Cause of Sin and Satan, of Vice and Prophaneness: It is not the Cause of this, or the other contending Party of Christians, this is too narrow a View to have any Place here. You are engaged in a truly Christian Cause, the Cause of Christ, in opposition to the Cause of Satan. *As the Son of God was manifested, to destroy the Works of the Devil.* † So you are Fellow Labourers under him, endeavouring to pull down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan.

2. To suffer as a Christian, is to suffer with a truly Christian Spirit, to bear Reproaches patiently. *This is thank worthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully.* But if when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto are ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. § Christ hath commanded us to love our Enemies, to bless them that curse us. † And when he was on the Cross, he prayed for his Murderers. * *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

WHEN we suffer Reproach, or any other Kind of ill Treatment on Christ's Account, as Stephen endured Stoning, praying for our

† Joh. i. 3. 8.

† Mat. v. 44.

§ 1 Pet. ii. 19. 24.

* Luk. xxiii. 34.

Enemies, as he did; † when being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we entreat, * then we suffer as Christians.

WE are to pity and pray for those that Reproach us, and tho' we are to hate the Garment spotted with the Flesh, yet we are to have Compassion on the Sinner; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will. ¶

WHEN any one thus suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; neither of the Cause for which he suffers, nor of the Reproaches cast on him, whatsoever they be. For the which Cause I also suffer these Things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day. † St. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, tho' he suffered much for it; nor was he ashamed of his Chains, Bonds, and Imprisonment, for he gloryed in them, often calling himself the Prisoner of Christ; and he charged Timothy in this Manner, be not thou therefore ashamed of the Testimony of our Lord, nor of me his Prisoner *; nor let him be ashamed of his Hopes, and Expectations of a glorious Reward; Faithful is he who hath promised.

BUT let him glorify God on this Behalf, i. e.
 “ Let him give Glory to God, who enables
 “ him thus patiently, to suffer for his Sake;
 “ or let him be careful, so to behave himself

† Acts vii. 60.

* 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13.

¶ 2 Tim. ii. 25. 26.

† 2 Tim. i. 12.

* 2 Tim. i. 8.

“ under his Sufferings, that he may Glorify
 “ God, in the Day of Visitation. †

*THE Apostles departed from the Jewish Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name. **

SUFFERING Christians in the 1st Ages did not only rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God, that you will say was a solid Foundation of Rejoicing. But the Apostle adds, *And not only so, but we glory in Tribulations also, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience; and Patience, Experience; and Experience, Hope: And Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. † Therefore I take Pleasure,* (says that Great and Good Apostle,) *in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses, for Christ's Sake. ¶*

The Application.

1. DOTH the Apostle here suppose that Christians would be Reproached for the Name of Christ? Then let them forbear Reproaching one another. Let us leave that to the Enemies of Christ, and his Disciples: For Christians to vilify, and give hard Names one to another, is to resemble the wicked One, and not their Great Lord and Master, who was *meek and lowly in Heart*. Hereby we should greatly dis-serve the Cause of Religion and Vertue, and put new Life into the Enemies of God and Christ, and all that is Good. We should remember *the Canaanite still dwels in the Land*. When Michael the Arch-Angel contended with the Devil, disputing about

† Whitby in Loc.

* Acts v. 41.

† Rom. v. 2, 3, 4, 5. ¶ 2 Cor. xii. 10.

the Body of Moses, he durst not bring against him a railing Accusation. *

IF you have bitter Envyng and Strife in your Hearts, Glory not, and Lye not against the Truth: This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish: For where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil Work. How often is the contrary Temper and Practice recommended to us in the New Testament? The Wisdom that is from above, is first Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy. And the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace. † Let all Bitterness and Wrath, and evil Speaking, be put away from you, with all Malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's Sake, hath forgiven you. ¶ Put on therefore, (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another; if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; and above all Things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness; and let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body. * Finally, Be ye all of one Mind, having Compassion one of another: Love as Brethren, be Pitiful, be Courteous, not rend'ring Railing for Railing, but contrary-wise, Blessing: For he that will Love Life, and see good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips, that they speak no Guile; Let him eschew Evil, and do Good; let him seek Peace and ensue it. †

* 9. Jude.

† Jam. iii. 14. to the End.

¶ Ephes. iv. 31, 32.

* Col. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15,

† 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING all the Re-
proaches you have suffered in the glorious
Cause of Reformation, be not ashamed, nor
discouraged. *The Eyes of the Lord are upon the
Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers :*
*But the Face of the Lord is against them that do
Evil, and who is he that will Harm you, if ye be
Followers of that which is Good? But if ye suffer
for Righteousness, Happy are ye, and be not afraid
of their Terrour, neither be troubled. §*

THE Success God hath given you already,
should out-weigh all the undeserved Re-
proaches you have met with from the Pa-
trons and Advocates of Vice. Tho' you have
not been able to drive Wickedness out of the
Land, yet you have in some Measure driven
it into Corners. It is with Pleasure I read,
That, * " As many have been recovered
" from Courses of Wickedness, by the So-
" cieties Endeavours; so some have joined
" with them, like the Apostle *Paul*, in sup-
" porting a Design, which once they destroy-
" ed; they owe their Recovery to the Re-
" forming Societies, and pay their Acknow-
" ledgments in chearful Services, towards
" the Recovery of others.

*These you have saved, with Fear pulling them out
of the Fire.* † In your last, which is the One
and Thirtieth Account of your Proceedings,
you assure us, " That the Societies have pro-
" secuted, and been Assisting in prosecuting
" from the 1st of *December*, 1724, to the 1st
" of *December*, 1725, divers Sorts of Offenders,
" viz. for lewd and disorderly Practices; keep-
" ing of bawdy and disorderly Houses; exer-
" cising their Trades, and ordinary Callings

§ 1 Pet. iii. 12, 13, 14. * Occas. Pap. Vol. 3. No 12.

† Vide, *Their last Account*, Page 4, 5.

“ on the Lord’s Days ; prophane Swearing
 “ and Cursing ; Drunkenness ; common Ga-
 “ ming ; and for keeping common Gaming
 “ Houses ; in all 2506. The Total Number
 “ of Persons prosecuted by the Societies, in,
 “ or near *London*, only for Debauchery and
 “ Prophaneness for 34 Years past, are calcu-
 lated at 91, 899. It is to be hop’d, among so
 many convicted by you, some have been re-
 claimed from their Evil Ways.

CONSIDER farther, from what Quarter
 these Reproaches come, even from those who
 hate to be reformed, *who walk in Lasciviousness,*
Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, and Banquet-
ings. Who would Reproach Christ himself,
 if he was here again on Earth.

AND it is no worse Usage than he met
 with, while in our World ; and in this Man-
 ner did they Reproach, and Revile the Pro-
 phets and Apostles, who were before you.

BY an Eye of Faith look to the glorious
 Rewards, that will be bestowed upon you
 hereafter ; you are endeavouring to *turn many*
unto Righteousness, you shall shine as Stars for ever
*and ever ; ** and in the mean Time *the Spirit*
of God and of Glory resteth upon you. Learn with
Moses to esteem the Reproach of Christ greater
Riches than the Treasures of Egypt, yea, than
the Treasures of the whole World ; and with
him have respect to the Recompence of the Reward. †
Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with
so great a Cloud of Witnesses ; (who were all
Reformers in their several Ages) let us lay
aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily
befet us, and let us run with Patience the Race that
is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and

* Dan. xii. 3.

† Heb. xi. 26.

*Finisher of our Faith ; who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God : For consider him, I say again, consider him, that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your Minds ; ye have not yet resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin. **

3. LET those that are able be prevailed upon to contribute freely, and offer themselves willingly, to carry on so useful a Design, which is attended with Difficulties and Discouragements, tho' it is supported by good Laws, and countenanced by vertuous Magistrates. If you would have the Spirit of Glory, and of God rest on you at present, be not backward to engage in this Work, on the Account of the Reproaches you may endure, since they are Reproaches for Christ. The Prosecutions of Offenders are often attended with very great Expences, which should be considered by those, whom God hath blessed with easy and plentiful Circumstances. Be not unwilling to help forward so good a Work, wherein the Honour of God, the Interest of the Redeemer, the Welfare of the Nation, your own Peace and Happiness, and the Good of your dear Posterity, are so much concerned.

WHEN Iniquity comes in like a Flood, if the Spirit of the Lord did not (by these Methods) lift up a Standard against it ; had not we been like unto Sodom, and altogether like unto Gomorrah in Wickedness, by this Time ? And what wou'd be the Consequence thereof ? Should not we be like to them in their Plagues ?

“CAN you think it reasonable, that so
 “ great a Burthen should always lie on the
 “ generous few, who First listd themselves
 “ in this difficult Service? Would you have
 “ them despair, and sink under Discourage-
 “ ment at last, and leave raging Wickedness
 “ to show its Head every where, and stalk
 “ and brave it about uncontroul’d? Have
 “ you no Concern to preserve the few Lea-
 “ vings of Vertue and Piety among us? Or
 “ will you grudge the necessary Expence of
 “ it? And that I must say, (as the same Ex-
 “ cellent Writer adds) to all Men of Sub-
 “ stance, That however you got what you
 “ have, I am sure you could not keep it long,
 “ or enjoy it with Comfort, if it were not for
 “ Restraints upon the Sons of Riot and Vio-
 “ lence. †

LASTLY, Let us all Accompany these
 generous and pious Endeavours with our ear-
 nest and constant Prayers to God, since a vi-
 cious and debauched Age, cannot be reform-
 ed by *Might, or Power, without the Spirit of the Lord.*

BESIDES the notorious Vices that have
 been often exposd from the Pulpit and the
 Press, I beg leave to mention Two Things to
 you; one of which hath been frequently hint-
 ed to you, and may deserve your farther se-
 rious Consideration. The one is the great
 Increase of Publick Houses, where Brandies
 and distilled Liquors are Sold; these are be-
 come publick Nufances in all Parts of the
 Town; here poor Creatures for a very little
 Money, not only intoxicate themselves, but
 some have fallen Sacrifices on the Spot. “ More
 “ of the Common People Die of Consumpti-
 “ ons, Fevers, Dropfies, Palsies, Apoplexies,

“ contracted by the immoderate Use of these Li-
 “ quors, than of all other Distempers besides,
 “ arising from other Causes; and when their Blood
 “ is inflamed, and their Passions heightened, they
 “ are prepared for any Kind of Wickedness. †

T H E other is the late unnatural Wicked-
 ness, which ought not to be mentioned amongst
 Christians, without the greatest Abhorrence,
 much less practised. Oh! That ever such hor-
 rid Lewdness should be committed in our *Israel*;
 May some of them be reduced, and become In-
 struments of Reclaiming others, with whom you
 will be ready to exert your selves with a Chri-
 stian, and Prudent Zeal, against these Sinners of
Sodom among us; yet I add again, as a necessary
 Caution, *Take heed of doing Evil that Good may*
come of it:

M A Y we not fear that *Sodom's* Sins unrepent-
 ed of, will bring down *Sodom's* Vengeance. *Even*
as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Cities about
them, in like Manner, giving themselves over to
Fornication, and going after strange Flesh, are set
forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of
*eternal Fire. **

G O on, Worthy Sirs, and prosper in your
 noble Attempts, to beat down the Kingdom of
 Sin and Satan; *and the Lord be with you.* You
 have the Laws of God, and of the Land on your
 Side; the Prayers, (I wish I could add, and the
 Endeavours) of all good Men. *Be not then weary*
in Well-doing, you shall reap in due Season, if you
faint not. † Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye
stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work
of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your La-
*bour is not in vain in the Lord. **

N O W unto him that is able to do exceeding
 abundantly, above all that we ask or think, accord-
 ing to the Power that worketh in us, unto him be
 Glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all
 Ages, World without End. Amen. †

† Bishop of Litch. and Cov. Ref. Ser. 4. Jan. 1724. P. 15. 16.

* Jude 7. † Gal. vi. 9. * 1 Cor. xv. 58. † Eph. iii. 20, 21.

